

EASTERN EUROPE

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3. Zapotocky likely to succeed Gottwald: The death of Klement Gottwald on 14 March will not affect the stability of the Communist regime or its relationship with the USSR, and his successor is not expected to have any trouble maintaining control of the party.

Premier Antonin Zapotocky, a veteran Communist and one of the founders of the Czech Communist Party, is the most logical successor. His power as premier was significantly enhanced in January by the concentration of government control in an inner cabinet of nine deputy premiers under his chairmanship. It is very possible that this move was made in expectation of the early demise of Gottwald who has been ill for over a year. Zapotocky, who has been an outspoken exponent of vigilance and discipline and increased industrial production, can be expected to follow the policies of Gottwald.

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